

# Back to School Family Guide

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Parents and caregivers have always wanted to know more about what their child is learning in school. After all, families are their child's first – and most important – teacher.

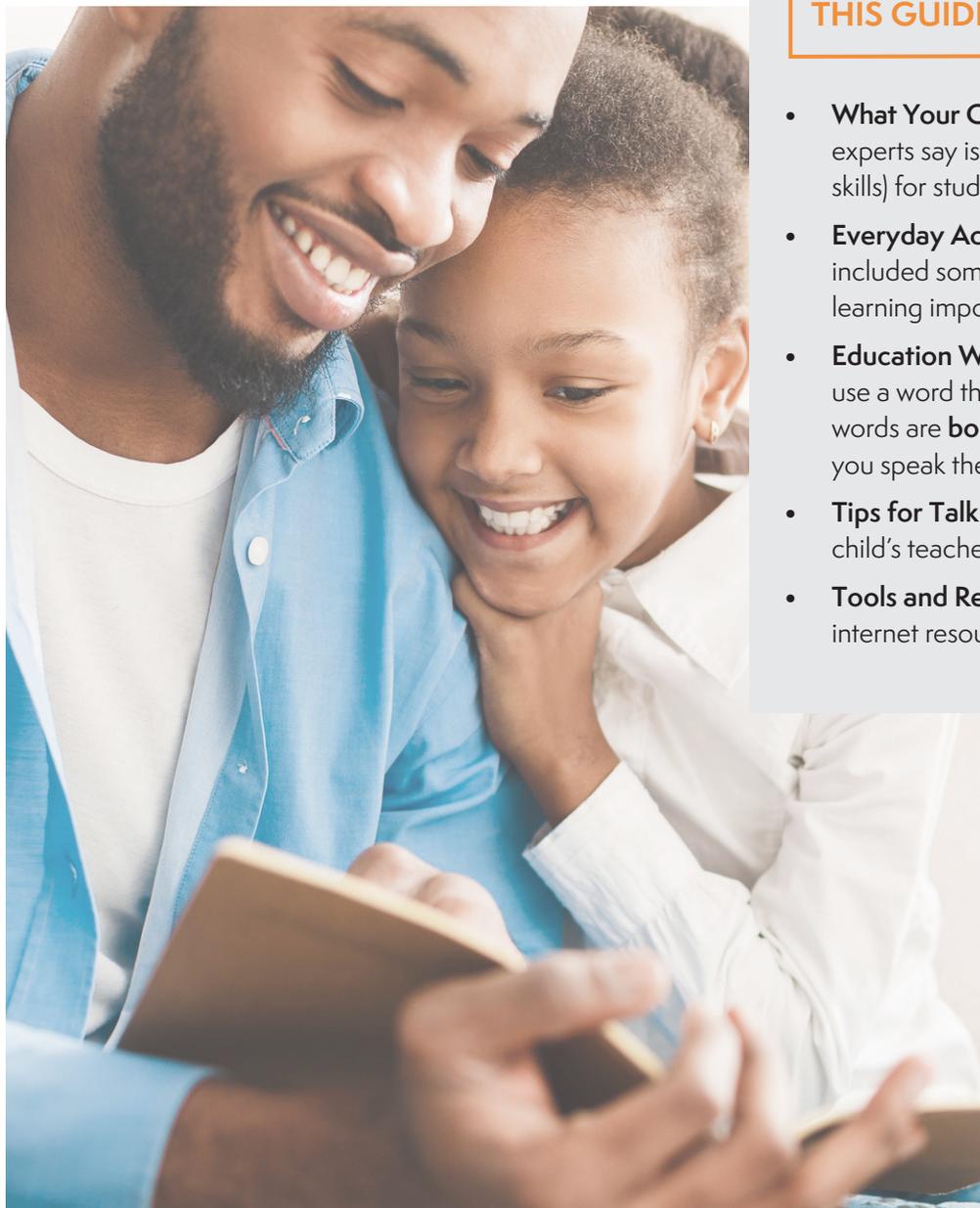
Parents, family members, grandparents, and other caregivers play a critical role in learning at home. So, we include all these people when we talk about how families can support kids.

This guide is meant to support families and students academically in literacy and math. Of course, students will be learning other subjects too, but literacy and math are the building blocks for everything else.

# GRADE 2

## THIS GUIDE INCLUDES

- **What Your Child Should Know & Be Able to Do** – What experts say is the most important content (knowledge and skills) for students to learn by the end of second grade.
- **Everyday Activities to Support Learning** – We've included some ways you can support your child in learning important content and skills in literacy and math.
- **Education Words** – Sometimes, you'll hear educators use a word that has a specific meaning in schools. Those words are **bolded**. Understanding those terms will help you speak the same language.
- **Tips for Talking with Teachers** – How you and your child's teacher can work together to help your child grow.
- **Tools and Resources to Help** – We've chosen a few internet resources that best match each grade's content.



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# LITERACY

## WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO



Throughout the school year, 2nd grade students will spend the most time working on the following topics. They should understand them well by the end of the year.

### Learning to read and write:

- Matching letters and sounds to sound out and write most words. (This may include **inventive spelling** for writing.) Students should be able to accurately decode and write most commonly spelled one and two syllable words.
- Recognizing, spelling, and properly using those little grammatical words that hold the language together (for example, “a,” “the,” “to,” “of,” “from,” “I,” “is,” “are”).
- Reading and rereading **decodable** texts and words/sentences independently so that the reading is smooth.
- Reading grade level texts smoothly and with expression, at a **fluency** rate of between 70-130 words per minute by the end of the year.
- Writing complete sentences, with mostly correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

### Learning about the world through text:\*

- Asking and answering questions about stories and texts that are read aloud to them or they read to themselves. Retelling what happened and explaining key ideas.
- Figuring out the meaning of unknown words by using pictures, context, glossaries, etc. (Children may need support with pronunciation.) Figuring out the meaning of words in context when a known prefix or suffix is used (“happy/unhappy;” “pain/painful/painless”).
- Showing something new they have learned from a text or about a topic. This can be in any form: speaking and conversation, illustrations, letters, journals, stories, posters or sentences on the page.
- Writing about what happened or information learned from the text. Children should include a title, an introduction, well developed examples, and a concluding statement or section.

*\*The texts used for this purpose should be a mix of those complex texts read aloud to the child and those read independently (with support as needed).*



## EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Turn on the closed captioning while watching TV to allow your child to read along with the dialogue.
- Have “book talk” conversations. Ask your child to summarize the important ideas in their own words. Ask your child to show you what part of the text provided this information.
- Pick a topic to learn about together. Read books, look online, do things together. You can help your child build knowledge and develop a love of learning.
- Encourage your child to use writing in the real world. This can include authentic writing (grocery lists, notes, chore lists, etc.) as well as writing in a journal, book response notebook, or other creative writing opportunities.



# MATHEMATICS

## WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO



Throughout the school year, 2nd grade students will spend the most time working on the following topics. They should understand them well by the end of the year.

- Solving challenging addition and subtraction word problems with one or two steps. (For example, a “one-step” problem would be: “Lucy has 23 fewer apples than Julie. Julie has 47 apples. How many apples does Lucy have?”)
- Mentally adding the sum of any two single digit numbers (remembering that  $7 + 9 = 16$ ). Subtracting mentally with ease from a number 20 or less.
- Understanding what the digits mean in three-digit numbers. (The number 342 refers to 3 hundreds, 4 tens, and 2 ones.)
- Using understanding of **place value** to add and subtract three-digit numbers ( $811 - 367$ ). Adding and subtracting two-digit numbers with ease ( $77 - 28$ ).
- Measuring and estimating length in standard units.
- Solving addition and subtraction word problems involving length. (For example, “The pen is 2 cm longer than the pencil. If the pencil is 7 cm long, how long is the pen?”)



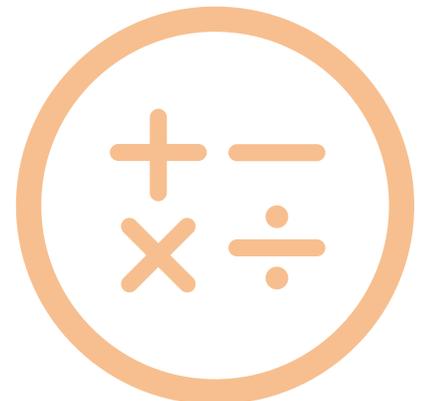
## EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

- Ask children addition and subtraction problems with one or two steps as they engage with their world. For example,

**One step:** “Today we are going to spend 70 minutes reading and doing puzzles. 25 minutes will be for doing puzzles. How many minutes will we read?”

**Two step:** “You gathered 60 vegetables from the community garden. You gathered 30 cobs of corn and 20 tomatoes. The rest of the vegetables were peppers. How many peppers did you collect?”

- Practice addition. Add ones and ones, tens and tens, and hundreds and hundreds for problems like  $413 + 281$ .





## EDUCATION WORDS



Sometimes, you'll hear educators use a word that has a specific meaning in schools. Understanding those terms will help you speak the same language!

### Decodable

Decodable texts are those that are connected to sound and spelling patterns that have already been taught, so most words the students read will be ones they can decode based on what they have been taught. (For example, students who have learned the sounds /a/, /c/, and /t/ can decode "cat.")

### Fluency

The ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression that shows comprehension of what is being read.

### Inventive spelling

Spelling a word using spelling attempts based on letters that the child knows to represent each sound. Accurate spelling is less important than ensuring that your child is using what they have been taught, and building up their ability to sound out words when writing.

### Place value

Every digit in a number has a place value based on its position in the number. For example, in the number 548, the digit 5 is in the hundreds place, and its place value is 500. The digit 4 is in the tens place, and its place value is 40. The digit 8 is in the ones place, and its place value is 8.

### Reading level

Teachers often determine the grade level at which a student is reading. But sometimes, children are then limited to reading texts at that level (typically a letter or number). This practice is one to be wary of, particularly if children are limited to reading only texts that are below the grade level goals, or texts that aren't **decodable** and don't match their phonics instruction.

## TIPS FOR TALKING WITH TEACHERS

### Literacy

- What are my child's strengths, and how do you use them in instruction?
- How do you select texts? Will my child see characters and topics that represent them, their background, and their identity? Will they learn new perspectives and about new and diverse characters through the texts you use in the classroom?
- What letters and sounds should my child have mastered at this point in the year? Has my child mastered these sounds? Does my child have a chance to read texts that help them practice decoding sounds they are learning? Be sure to talk about what you are seeing at home.
- What topics are children learning about through reading? What should my child be able to understand, write, and talk about as a result of what they have read? Topics in history? Topics in science?





## TIPS FOR TALKING WITH TEACHERS (continued)

- Is my child able to speak and listen in class discussions and conversations in ways that show you they understand what they are reading and learning about? If not, what challenges are they facing?
- How frequently does my child read grade level text independently? If they are not reading grade level text independently, why not? How are you supporting any reading needs they have while still allowing for time with grade level text? How can I help?
- What kinds of book(s) is my child reading during independent reading? Are they limited to a specific **reading level**?

### Math



- What kinds of number problems are children learning to solve this year?
- Ask for specific updates on how your child is progressing in their understanding of the key content of the grade.
- How does my child approach complex math tasks? What are some suggestions for me to encourage them in learning challenging content?
- What should my child be able to understand and talk about as a result of what they have learned?
- Is my child able to demonstrate to you that they understand what they are learning about? If not, what challenges are they facing? How can I help?
- How can I support a positive approach to learning math?

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO HELP



### Literacy

- What success in second grade reading looks like by the end of the year  
<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/grades/2nd-grade/>
- What second grade writing samples look like from the start of the year to the end  
<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/category/milestones-topics/writing-samples/>
- Read and learn together with these texts (levels 1 and 2)  
<http://www.textproject.org/teachers/students/fyi-for-kids/>
- Forty passages to help students build **fluency** over the course of the school year  
<https://achievethecore.org/page/1021/fluency-packet-for-the-2-3-grade-band>
- Use this **fluency** rubric with your child to determine how smoothly they are reading  
[http://www.timrasinski.com/presentations/multidimensional\\_fluency\\_rubric\\_4\\_factors.pdf](http://www.timrasinski.com/presentations/multidimensional_fluency_rubric_4_factors.pdf)
- Use this guidance on “text sets” to find resources and ideas about learning about content through reading  
<https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Text%20Set%20Guidance.pdf>

